UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
18th meeting
held on
Thursday, 17 October 1991
at 3.30 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

(j) EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.14

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

91-56612 3979S (E)

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/46/SR.18
23 October 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

/...

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

(j) EFFECTIVE MOBILIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (A/46/464)

1. Mrs. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the effective mobilization and integration of women in development (A/46/464), said that the way in which the question of women in development was considered had undergone a significant evolution with the adoption of a less subjective, more technical and pragmatic approach. One reason why traditional development theories and policies had been unable to overcome poverty and inequality had been their failure to take account of the economic and social role of women. However, recent studies on the role of women in development had shown that, as the concept of development had broadened, it had become impossible to categorize as developed countries where inequality between the sexes persisted. Economic development must take women's economic behaviour and constraints into account.

2. The Secretary-General's report was based on new statistics drawn from a recent publication entitled The World's Women: 1970-1990, which the Statistical Office had prepared with assistance from the Division for the Advancement of Women, and on recent work done by international organizations and researchers. The report reflected four important ideas. The first concerned the need to understand women's economic role in order to anticipate better their reactions to the market. New statistics showed that an understanding of women's economic behaviour made it easier to anticipate the labour force's response to various market stimuli. For example, some studies of economic adjustment had shown that high salaries were not in themselves sufficient to attract labour, particularly where the labour force was largely feminine. Supplementary measures, such as the regulation of night work or efforts to address social and cultural constraints to women's economic participation, were also necessary. Thus even in areas where market mechanisms were fully operative, the old idea that economic agents were gender-neutral must be abandoned. The informal sector provided a case in point.

3. The second important theme was the need to adapt economic policy instruments to reflect the new understanding of women's economic role. Policies and programmes should specifically take into account not only economic constraints but also family responsibilities and other socio-cultural constraints which determined women's participation in economic life. Implementing policies that took account of the specific role of women was not an easy exercise, however, as the example of credit showed. According to the report, the higher cost of credit systems adapted to the needs of women, difficulties in extending and institutionalizing pilot experiences at the macroeconomic level and the persistence of credit regulations that discriminated against women all posed obstacles to such policies.

(Mrs. Sellami-Meslem)

4. The third central idea reflected in the report was that women's participation appeared to be essential to the implementation of policies that took gender differences into account. Women's participation in the definition of policies and development programmes was a basic assumption of the concept of "participatory development" which more and more Governments and international institutions were exploring. Participation could be seen as a way of overcoming a lack of knowledge in sectors and regions where the role of women and their aspirations were not well known. Placing emphasis on participation meant enhancing the role of non-governmental organizations and national machinery for the advancement of women. The Division for the Advancement of Women had been working with such national bodies for a number of years.

5. The fourth central topic concerned the instrument by which the States Members of the United Nations had expressed their common objectives in the area of development: the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, which reflected the current thinking about women and development. The report developed the idea that the Strategy stood at the crossroads between the traditional approach to the question of women in development, which emphasized the possible negative effects of development in terms of women's vulnerability, and the more positive approach currently emerging, which the report endorsed. The traditional approach had been a necessary one, but it was equally important to acknowledge the that the recognition of women's role in development might serve as a powerful stimulus for an economy. The positive approach of the Strategy, in which women were perceived as actors in development, could be found in the paragraphs of the report dealing with agriculture. Although that was the only specific sector in which women's contribution was recognized, the approach could be extended to many other sectors, as the report suggested.

6. For reasons of equity as well as efficiency, it was extremely important that the Commission on the Status of Women should monitor the implementation of the International Development Strategy, as the Economic and Social Council had suggested in its resolution 1990/10. For its part, the Division for the Advancement of Women intended to hold a seminar in December 1991 which would examine past approaches, progress and areas of stagnation. On the basis of that seminar, it would begin, in association with other organizations of the United Nations system, to undertake the studies necessary for the 1994 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development.

7. Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that those countries had long recognized the importance of women's full integration in the development process. The Development Council of the Community had concluded that such integration could best be achieved by recognizing the importance of women's economic and social roles, providing women with the means to fulfil those roles effectively, improving their self-help capacity and structures and ensuring that they benefited from their involvement in the development process. It had welcomed

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

the greater emphasis placed on the role of women by the fourth Lomé Convention between the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Economic Community and the Convention's recognition of the importance of women's contribution to the development process.

8. Improving women's economic and social position was not only desirable from an instrumental point of view, but was also a legitimate objective in itself. In that respect, women's autonomy - control over their own lives in the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural fields - was an objective of central importance. Given the importance of women's economic contribution to development, their specific concerns must be addressed by national and international economic development programmes, especially where structural adjustment was involved.

9. The data presented in the World Economic Survey 1991, the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development and The World's Women: 1970-1990 showed that women were the first victims of economic crises and were over-represented in the poorest strata of society. The Community and its member States would seek to adopt development policies that addressed that problem. If women were to achieve more equitable social conditions at all levels, their participation in economic and political life must be encouraged. The Twelve looked forward to the outcome of the seminar on the integration of women in development to be organized in December 1991 by the Division for the Advancement of Women.

10. An important aspect of development was the relationship between women and the environment. Women played a crucial role all over the world as primary environmental caretakers, managing natural resources at the community level. Women in many communities had developed management policies that had promoted sustainable development. In many local situations women were environmental experts, and should therefore be granted equal access to and control over resources so that they could make their own decisions in managing their environment. As women in developing countries worked under severe time constraints, measures to help alleviate their burdens must be found. To ensure that environmental management practices were not neglected when women's active involvement and autonomy were limited by a lack of control over resources, incentives should be included in environmental regeneration projects and programmes. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) offered an opportunity to put such proposals into effect. The European Community and its member States believed that UNCED must address critical issues relating to women's economic, social and environmental contributions to sustainable development. The integration of women in development must be a key element of all Conference deliberations, documentation and outputs. Moreover, Agenda 21 should be adapted and improved to take the account of the lessons learned from women.

11. Development cooperation programmes should also take account of the need to prevent the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, particularly women, which was a serious violation of human rights and a contemporary form of slavery.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

12. The world conference on women to be held in 1995 would offer an opportunity to review and appraise the progress made in implementing the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The conference should seek to formulate clear and specific guidelines for improving the position of women in development. The recommendations contained in the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development constituted an important input to the preparations for that Conference.

13. In the context of the restructuring of the United Nations system, it was important that all organizations of the system should incorporate women in development concepts into their programmes. In addition, the importance of and the need for the specific mandates of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) as autonomous bodies within the United Nations system should not be overlooked. Lastly, he wished to stress the important role of officials with specific responsibility for women in development issues in the organizations of the system.

14. Mrs. SILVA (Chile) said it was paradoxical that, while women were active participants in economic activity, they were the last to receive the benefits of progress. Member States should therefore renew their efforts to introduce appropriate legislation and to change social structures and attitudes in order to enhance the role of women in development. Adequate resources should be made to guarantee the success of those efforts.

15. The adequate integration of women in the economic process was vital to the attainment of medium- and long-term development objectives. Accordingly, outdated concepts must be discarded and special treatment must be given to working women which would guarantee them equal opportunities, equal pay and equal incentives in a competitive work environment. Night work and maternity benefits were two priority areas in which reforms were needed. Many countries had begun to introduce new kinds of parental leave that could be taken by either mothers or fathers; that, clearly, fostered a more egalitarian work relationship between men and women.

16. Housework should not only be appreciated but should be divided equally between spouses. That called for long-term programmes to educate certain sectors of the population, particularly in the developing countries. Such programmes should include the enactment of legislation to provide retirement benefits for housewives and introduce specific courses at all levels of education with a view to changing habits and behaviour. Educational programmes should also take account of new ideas regarding the effective integration of women in development.

17. The inferior status of working women in the developing countries was detrimental to both women and the countries themselves. Women were paid much less than men, a fact which undoubtedly did not encourage them to seek remunerative employment. The percentage of non-active professional women was

(Mrs. Silva, Chile)

much higher than that of men, which implied that government investment in the education and training of women was unprofitable. The female workforce was not only underemployed but, in general, was engaged in tasks that were qualitatively inferior to those done by men, a situation which led to prejudice about women's abilities and a belittling of their role in achieving economic growth and development.

18. Mr. NEBIE (Burkina Faso) said that greater emphasis should be placed on the education, technical training and health of women, since more vigorous action in those fields would provide the basis for the integration of women in development. His delegation welcomed the women's activities of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UNIFEM which should be joined by other agencies in order to ensure the effective implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

19. The portion of the report of the Director General for Development and International Cooperation on operational activities (A/46/206/Add.2, annex) which dealt with women in development pointed out that the United Nations staff had not yet acquired the competence, knowledge or experience needed to promote the integration of women in development. Since that state of affairs contributed to the failure of certain women-related projects, the Organization should take steps to improve the competence of its staff as soon as possible.

20. Burkina Faso had realized that its development would not be possible without the full participation of women, who constituted 51.8 per cent of its population. In Burkina Faso, the implementation of policies for the integration of women in development had been assigned to the highest State executive bodies. The Office of the Secretary of State for Social Action was responsible for promoting the economic role of women in national life by enhancing their role in the informal sector, creating well-paying jobs and facilitating their access to education and technical and vocational training. At the national level, a division to coordinate all activities for integrating women in the development process had been established. Specific action had been taken in the field of education, in particular to eradicate illiteracy. The Government had adopted a family planning policy to make women more aware of the advantages of birth spacing, and vaccination programmes for children and pregnant women had been introduced. The new property and agrarian system gave women the same right as men to own and cultivate their own land. At the political level, particular attention had been given to involving women in decision-making and enabling them to hold mangerial posts.

21. Mrs. ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that, between 1980 and 2020, the number of octogenarians in the developing countries would increase fivefold, from 12 million to 64 million persons. The majority of very old people would be living in the developing countries, and most of them would be women. If the lives of elderly women in the twenty-first century resembled those of today's elderly women, the world would face a disaster of immense proportions. The overwhelming majority of older women in developing countries

(Mrs. Alvarez, Dominican Republic)

were illiterate, poor, socially dependent and lacked the personal resources to respond to changing social conditions. Women in the third world were more likely to spend their later years alone, and only 40 per cent of women over age 60 in the developing countries were married, as compared with 75 per cent of men.

22. The modernization process also worked against older women. Modern industry drew the young - predominantly males - from the countryside into the cities. The old were often left behind in the villages, and old women frequently had the additional burden of caring for their grandchildren on virtually no income. Increasingly, younger women who in the past would have remained at home to care for the elderly were also moving to urban areas in search of employment.

23. Social security systems in the third world were grossly inadequate, particularly for women. The consensual unions prevalent in many countries deprived women of whatever government benefits for the aged they might have received if they had been married. Pensions were awarded to workers in civil service and industry, while rural workers and those employed in the informal economy - which included many women - were penalized.

24. In order to integrate older women in development, it would be necessary to raise the consciousness of the population - including older women themselves - regarding the contributions that older women could make to society. That could be done by educating girls and young women and encouraging the press, television, advertising agencies and the general public to change their negative image of the elderly. If the international community did not soon begin to acknowledge and expand the role of older women in development and regard them as social assets, the problem of meeting their needs would evolve into a crisis as the burden of caring for greater numbers of such women with fewer resources would increase.

25. Miss HASSAN (Egypt) said that, while the Third Committee dealt with social and humanitarian affairs, including issues relating to women, the outcome of its work was heavily political and economic in nature and often duplicated the work done by the Second Committee on the issue of women in development. The Second Committee considered one item on women without the benefit of the report of the Commission on the Status of Women or the significant contributions of INSTRAW or the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In short, the Second and the Third Committees ended up doing each other's work without the relevant input of the United Nations system.

26. The Commission on the Status of Women, the central forum for women in the United Nations system, had no influence on the operational or research activities of United Nations bodies that dealt with women. Moreover, the intergovernmental women's machinery had very little influence on the preparations for major conferences, such as the United Nations Conference on

(Miss Hassan, Egypt)

Environment and Development, that were of particular concern to women. At the Secretariat level, the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women met annually at Vienna and served as the focal point for women in the United Nations system, while another Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women reported to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). In addition, there was a separate system-wide medium-term plan for women. Clearly, both mainstreaming and effective coordination were lacking.

27. The Second Committee might choose to adopt ad hoc measures to address the problem, such as requesting the Commission on the Status of Women to report to the Second Committee, combining the deliberations of the Second and Third Committees or consolidating the relevant items to be addressed in one forum. However, such measures would not bring women-related issues into the mainstream of the activities of the United Nations system.

28. Her delegation proposed that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be maintained as a treaty body with closer ties to the Human Rights Committee. The Commission on the Status of Women should be composed of intergovernmental experts but should also encourage the participation of representatives from non-governmental organizations who would have a different status from that of the experts. INSTRAW might become the Commission's research arm. The secretariat that would service the new structure should have closer ties to the Department of Public Information (DPI) as well as the Statistical Office of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs.

29. Under the arrangement she was proposing, women's issues would be addressed in an integrated manner. No separate items on women would be required in the Second and Third Committees, while the question of women in the Secretariat would be considered in the Fifth Committee. Overall responsibility for guaranteeing the mainstreaming of women-related issues at the intergovernmental level would rest with the various legislative organs and governing bodies of the system, while the head of the secretariat servicing the Commission on the Status of Women would be a member of ACC in order to facilitate the coordination of mainstreaming within the system.

30. Mr. EAFEARE (Papua New Guinea) said that attention to women's concerns was essential to economic development. The problems encountered by women were dictated by the social, economic, cultural and political systems of their countries and were particularly severe in the developing world. Despite efforts to implement the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, women's participation in development had continued to stagnate. The proportion of women in the labour markets who were engaged in low skilled and low-paid jobs, working under unfavourable conditions, remained unacceptably high.

31. Some 80 per cent of Papua New Guinea's population lived in rural areas, and its women were primarily concerned with subsistence food production and child-rearing. While it was important to maintain traditional values, an

(Mr. Eafeare, Papua New Guinea)

effective mechanism was still needed to implement national education, health, child care, sex education and family planning policies. On the basis of that conviction, his Government had introduced a national development strategy in 1976 which sought, inter alia, to increase the participation of women in all forms of economic, social, political and cultural life.

32. Subsequently the Government had formulated a national policy on women to ensure that the impact its policies and programmes might have on women would be considered before such activities were implemented. The women's policy was designed to create conditions conducive to the full integration of women in development, both as beneficiaries and as participants. Further measures to promote the participation of women included credit schemes to improve women's access to resources and to development assistance and a national communication network to mobilize women in policy-making areas and encourage cooperation at the local level.

33. Papua New Guinea believed that the mobilization of women and their integration in development required a strong national foundation comprising measures to disseminate information, dismantle discriminatory legislation, incorporate women's interests in social and economic policy, heighten gender awareness at all levels of government and increase the participation of women in economic decision-making. His Government remained committed to cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies in their efforts to integrate women more fully in the development process at the national and international levels and hoped to participate actively in the forthcoming meetings on women and the environment and on the integration of women in development.

34. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women) said that collaborative efforts within the United Nations system had led to significant progress during the 1970s and 1980s in integrating women into mainstream development. Nevertheless, substantial barriers still stood in the way of women, as evidenced by the facts and statistical trends recorded in The World's Women: 1970-1990, a joint publication by the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, the Statistical Office and UNIFEM. Despite the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, two thirds of the world's women remained poor, and the major changes in household and family life over the past 20 years had only increased their burden of responsibility.

35. Women had an essential role to play in the processes of change under way in the world, and they sought fair and equal access to the technology and training and credit necessary for their enterprises. Women could no longer agree to deal exclusively with so-called "women's issues", but wished to be equal partners in the political process.

36. The forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) offered a good example of the issues to which women attached great importance. The linkages between the marginalization of women and

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

environmental degradation required very close study as the poverty of women constituted a constant threat to the world's fragile environmental systems. Throughout the world, women had to strike a delicate balance between the use and management of their natural resource base and the ever-increasing responsibility of providing their families with food, fuel and water. In societies where men migrated to workplaces far from the home or families were forced to live in refugee camps those tasks had become almost the exclusive preserve of women. The poverty cycle had left women with little option but to adopt survival mechanisms which further strained already overburdened environmental systems. UNIFEM aimed to give voice to the concerns of women, thereby ensuring that the follow-up programme to UNCED would be more responsive to women's needs.

37. Another issue of concern to women was the connection between disaster relief and long-term development assistance. Although more than 75 per cent of all refugees were women and children, refugee policies and programmes rarely addressed the specific problems experienced by refugee women. At the invitation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNIFEM had undertaken to develop strategies for working more effectively with refugee women which could be replicated by larger agencies and non-governmental organizations. While UNIFEM could not be a major funding source for such programmes, it hoped to influence mainstream refugee programmes and to enhance the visibility of refugee women by supporting selected demonstration projects that highlighted the plight of women.

38. The UNDP Human Development Report 1991 stressed the importance of placing people at the centre of development. In line with that approach to development, UNIFEM aimed to highlight the enormous contribution made by women and to demonstrate that many differences between men and women were socially constructed and could therefore be changed. As part of the international movement for women in development, UNIFEM had helped to establish institutional structures to achieve women's full participation in society. The time had come for concerted practical action to find effective solutions to development problems.

39. However, UNIFEM was careful not to neglect its core programme. Financial figures for 1990 showed a 45 per cent improvement in UNIFEM programme delivery over the previous year, demonstrating its commitment to placing resources in the hands of poor women in developing countries. Contributions from all UNIFEM donors had thus been well managed, and she appealed for continued generous support at the forthcoming United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

40. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that the priorities of agriculture, which formed the basis for the development and self-sufficiency of all developing countries, posed a critical challenge for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the 1990s. Those priorities were identified in the FAO medium-term plan, in which rural women were accorded a predominant role.

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

41. Since its inception, FAO had always had a unit responsible for women's programmes. In 1988 it had adopted a five-year Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development, based on the accumulated experience of many years which demonstrated that development could not be achieved without the full participation of half the world's human resources, namely its female population. The most recent World Survey on the Role of Women in Development contained data that must be used in making agricultural policies and strategies more responsive to the needs of women; the FAO Plan of Action was already working towards that goal. The primary aims of the Plan were to provide member Governments with a programme to integrate women in development plans and in agricultural projects, to train FAO technical staff in procedures for the integration of women in agricultural development and to develop projects to meet the needs of rural women in the areas of training, technology and credit. Those activities were supported by measures to coordinate the efforts of the various technical services within FAO and those undertaken with government ministries. Support also took the form of budgetary allocations, intensified research and public awareness campaigns.

42. Measures to implement the FAO Plan of Action were closely linked to the FAO medium-term plan in three main areas: the elimination of rural poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition; the development of sustainable and environmentally appropriate agricultural production systems, adapted to the cultural and economic conditions of rural populations; and the improvement of the terms of trade in agricultural products, which had been adversely affected by structural adjustment programmes, with particularly severe consequences for rural women.

43. Despite the progress already achieved, considerable efforts were still needed to achieve the goals set in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The legal status of women as producers should be more carefully studied and, where necessary, corrected, and the employment opportunities available to women at the national and international levels should be enhanced. Women's agricultural organizations should be strengthened and women provided with greater access to credit, training, markets and agricultural extension services. Strengthened inter-agency cooperation was necessary to ensure that those aims were achieved, and a system should be elaborated for the dissemination of appropriate data and progress reports.

44. Miss DIALLO (Mali) said that despite progress achieved in implementing the provisions of General Assembly resolutions concerning the advancement of women, much remained to be done, particularly as women had been the most seriously affected by the economic crisis in the developing countries.

45. On gaining its independence, Mali had made women's full participation in the struggle against underdevelopment one of its priorities. Numerous initiatives had been undertaken by the Malian Government to ensure that women had equal access to credit, markets, the means of production and technology and that they were fully involved in decision-making processes.

(Miss Diallo, Mali)

46. It was not possible to build a nation without the full participation of all its human resources. The integration of women in development was a top priority of Mali's development programmes and plans. With the aid of the development partners and non-governmental organizations, several training projects were being initiated, while women were forming associations and cooperatives in order to gain fuller control over their lives.

47. Ensuring women's participation in development called not only for specific measures to support women at the national and regional levels, but also for a strengthening of international solidarity to solve the external debt problem, which compelled the developing countries to make choices that seldom took account of women's priorities. Her delegation proposed that during the mid-term review of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade and at the world conference on women, both scheduled to take place in 1995, particular attention should be given to women's economic contribution to development. During the mid-term review, account must also be taken of the views of women, who were the first victims of environmental degradation and the consequences of structural adjustment programmes. Development must not be seen simply as an end in itself but as the best means of strengthening equality between women and men, and of safeguarding peace.

48. Ms. McLENNAN (United States of America) said it now seemed self-evident that, of all systems of government, democracy offered the best chance for men and women to develop their own potential. In its Human Development Report 1991, UNDP had shown the high correlation between human development and human freedom. The report acknowledged the fact that participatory development was essential to achieving human development goals, and explicitly linked human and economic progress, defining development itself more broadly to include human factors as well as economic growth. Her delegation applauded that work and likewise supported the conclusions of the World Bank's World Development Report, which stated that progress in economic development coincided with investment in people, improving the climate for enterprise and opening economies to international trade and investment.

49. Just as walls had come down in Eastern Europe, the invisible wall excluding women from full participation in the development process was beginning to be dismantled. The United States had long advocated integrating women of all ages in the development process. Since 1973, all its bilateral development assistance programmes had included measures to integrate women into their countries' national economies. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Peace Corps had made significant progress in incorporating gender issues into their development efforts. In recent years, the United States had moved away from women-specific projects towards the integration of women into the mainstream of development assistance, thus maximizing their access to and control over resources, skills and benefits. In 1989 and 1990, the USAID women in development programme had focused on four sectors - agriculture, private enterprise, education, and the

(Ms. McLennan, United States)

environment and natural resources - and had provided training, technical assistance and support for research in the area of gender issues.

50. No country could maximize its economic status without fully involving its women; failure to do so would result in lower returns on investments and a host of social ills. The United States would continue to assist in ensuring that women had the skills and resources they needed to combat poverty.

51. Her delegation noted the wide range of activities being undertaken by the United Nations development system to further the integration of women in the development process, commending in particular the publication entitled The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics, which represented an important contribution to the collection, coordination and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data. women's issues must be incorporated into all organizational activities at all stages of programmes and projects. For example, women's issues should be thoroughly integrated in the report on the operational activities of the United Nations, and not discussed only in the special chapter on women in development. In addition, gender-sensitive statistical data systems must be strengthened and coordinated.

52. The integration of women's issues called for a higher level of funding. UNDP had earmarked $8 million of its Special Programme Resources for women in development during the Fifth Programming Cycle, thereby offering a potential source of funds if the revised programming recommendations of the Governing Council were followed.

53. Ms. AGUIRRE (Philippines) said that one year after the launching of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, her delegation remained concerned that too little had been done to further the integration of women in economic development. Immediate measures should be taken to translate the Strategy into more concrete terms. Although studies had been conducted on women's participation in the total development process, women's actual role in development was still unclear. In the Philippines, women were contributors to the family income and had always formed part of the agricultural and industrial labour force. Women were also active in the media and social movements, and a government programme existed to enhance their participation in the public sector. However, existing resources must be increased and made more readily available to fund development projects that focused on women, thus ensuring recognition and full exploitation of women's role in that area.

54. Much talk was heard of human resources development. It must be borne in mind that half of that so-called resource consisted of women, whose potential needed to be enhanced so that they could take their place in the mainstream of the development process. The efforts of the United Nations system in that regard were to be commended, since they would help women to become more self-reliant and economically independent.

(Ms. Aguirre, Philippines)

55. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) also believed in tapping the potential of women. ASEAN was closely following United Nations initiatives at the regional level, although it had not as yet developed its own regional strategy for integrating women in all aspects of economic development. The International Development Strategy would no doubt be very useful in that regard.

56. Her delegation looked forward to the seminar to be held at Vienna from 9 to 11 December 1991 to assess the achievements of the efforts to mobilize women in development at national and international levels and hoped that it would, inter alia, formulate some specific courses of action that could be readily implemented in the context of the new International Development Strategy. Efforts made thus far to implement the Strategy and the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation should be closely monitored to ensure that declarations of intent with regard to women were matched by productive results, quantifiable in real terms.

57. Mr. SAJADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said there were many reasons why women had yet to be fully integrated in the process of economic growth and development in the developing countries. As one of the most vulnerable groups, women in developing countries were exposed to many economic and social hardships brought about by the difficult international economic situation. Any attempt to alleviate their suffering and to promote their advancement must be linked to efforts to solve the overall problems of the developing nations.

58. Furthermore, unless women were provided with the necessary education, their integration in development would remain a matter for lip-service. While the United Nations system should provide the developing countries with the technical assistance necessary to remove the impediments to education for women, the developed nations must also increase their contributions to United Nations programmes in that field.

59. In order to secure the effective mobilization and participation of women in development, the issue must be dealt with at the national, regional and international levels, taking account of its economic, social and other aspects. Women must not be regarded as merely the agents of development, but as the beneficiaries of the fruits of economic progress.

60. In pursuit of the full enjoyment of their rights, Iranian women were now participating in a wide range of political, social, cultural and economic activities. Significant advances had been made on the educational front, while in employment, the Government had tried to accelerate women's integration in all economic activities. The participation of women in scientific and technical jobs and in management and administration had increased significantly, and more than 35 per cent of public sector employees were women. Legislation enabled women to work part-time, protected female employees from hard and dangerous work and discrimination on the grounds of maternity, ensured their right to work and safeguarded the health of pregnant

(Mr. Sajadi, Islamic Republic of Iran)

employees and their children. Although full integration of women in the development process was still far from being achieved, his Government was determined to ensure that women realized their full potential in economic activities.

61. Mr. HUSLID (Norway), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, welcomed the growing awareness of women's importance as actors in and contributors to the development process and commended the plans of action for the integration of women in development produced by almost all United Nations agencies, in accordance with the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The importance of securing education, better health and nutrition, employment and credit opportunities for women was now accepted by most agencies and nations; however, recent reports indicated that poverty among women was on the increase. While important as a tool for changing people's attitudes, well-formulated plans of action did not necessarily guarantee achievement of all aims in that sphere.

62. FAO and the IFAD had taken a step forward by explicitly defining poor women as a resource for national growth. That perspective facilitated women's integration in development planning at the grass-roots level, a prerequisite for continuous improvement of their status. However, women's workload must be carefully monitored, and additional activities must be met with corresponding reductions in their chores.

63. The knowledge acquired on women and gender issues must now lead to concrete action, and it was important to convey that message to decision makers in the United Nations system and to national authorities, both male and female. There was still a long way to go before women participated fully and on an equal footing with men at all levels of the decision-making process. Achievement of that goal would be one of the most important issues in the continuing efforts to integrate women in development.

64. Since many women were involved in trade and production in the informal sector, the potential of small-scale production was substantial. The Nordic countries thus appreciated the emphasis placed on increased credit opportunities for women in the reports and policy documents presented. It was also important that macroeconomic decisions, including structural adjustment policies in developing countries, should take the issue of women in development into account to benefit women and their families.

65. He stressed the importance of systematic gender-sensitizing and training and the need to utilize feedback to improve the effectiveness of such training. The operational departments of United Nations development organizations must be held accountable for the implementation of policies with regard to women in development. UNIFEM and INSTRAW could play important roles in that regard, but both organizations must be allocated adequate personnel and other resources.

(Mr. Huslid, Norway)

66. The Nordic countries attached great importance to two forthcoming events that would deal with the issue of women in development. The first was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil in 1992. Women's role as managers and protectors of the environment and as contributors to sustainable development was well known, and the Nordic countries would work to ensure that that role was reflected in conference documentation. The other event was the world conference on women, to be held in 1995, which would have women in development as one of its major themes. The seminar on women and development to be held at Vienna in December 1991 would mark the start of a preparatory phase aimed at making women in development a central issue at the conference.

67. Mr. YENEL (Turkey) said that, although policies might promote equality between men and women, they often were not reflected in reality. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies must be implemented vigorously, particularly in rural areas, where the inequalities were most glaring. The Secretary-General's report (A/46/464) tended to ignore the need to ensure greater participation by women in decision-making and management at the local level. Sustainable development was possible only if participation began at the grass-roots level. Many restrictions encountered by women were the result of long-standing social and cultural barriers and might not even be perceived as discriminatory by women themselves, owing to their general lack of education. The eradication of illiteracy should be viewed not as an objective in itself, but as a means of enabling women and men to secure an education. The economic advancement of women, particularly those engaged in agriculture, was essential in order to eliminate poverty and hunger. The Summit Meeting of First Ladies on the issue of the economic advancement of rural women, to be held at Brussels in February 1992, would help focus attention on a key element of the development process.

68. Ms. KOFLER (Austria) said that it was important to improve opportunities for women not only as a matter of human justice, but also as a means of enhancing economic performance and fostering sustainable development. Many studies had demonstrated a direct relationship between expanded opportunities for women and improved health and education, slower population growth and the easing of environmental pressures.

69. Her delegation endorsed the view that development strategies must not be gender-neutral. Awareness of the need to integrate women in development and to focus on women's issues had increased, particularly since the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Women. To ensure that women had access to services and opportunities in the context of bilateral and multilateral development assistance, special procedures must be developed to ensure that gender analysis and planning was a feature of all stages of the project cycle. In her country, a working group within the Ministry for Women's Affairs had begun to elaborate guidelines for that purpose. Because women still played a very minor role in high-level decision-making in most countries, strategies to increase their representation must be developed in order to provide a basis for gender-aware development policies.

(Ms. Kofler, Austria)

70. The International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade reflected a concern for equity, and it was necessary to monitor the integration of women in all aspects of the Strategy. The Commission on the Status of Women seemed to be the appropriate body to carry out that task.

71. Ms. RAYMOND (Canada) said that the United Nations study entitled The World's Women: 1970-1990, was a landmark publication which could be used by the specialized agencies, Governments and non-governmental organizations in developing policies to address discrimination against women. An investment in wider opportunities for women in health, education, formal and informal work and decision-making at all levels was an investment in society as a whole that would help to reduce poverty, slow population growth, protect the environment and promote equitable, sustainable development.

72. Her delegation commended the UNCED secretariat for its sponsorship of the Women and Children First Symposium, on the Impact of Poverty and Environmental Degradation on Women and Children, in May 1991 and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for organizing the Global Assembly on Women and the Environment, to be held at Miami, Florida, in November 1991. Her delegation also looked forward to the results of the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, also scheduled to be held at Miami in November.

73. Her delegation fully supported the decision on women in environment and development adopted by the Preparatory Committee for UNCED at its third session, in particular, the decision to include a global goal in Agenda 21 promoting the effective participation of women in knowledge-generation, decision-making and management at local, national, regional and interregional levels.

74. Throughout the world, the use and management of the natural resource base had become almost exclusively a woman's domain. As long as women remained poor and excluded from crucial decision-making processes, fragile ecosystems would continue to be threatened. Her country recognized the catalytic role of UNIFEM in ensuring the integration of the women's dimension in the UNCED process and commended UNIFEM for significantly improving its programme delivery rate during the past year. Her country, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), was pleased to have increased its funding to UNIFEM in 1991. CIDA had adopted a strategy on women and development five years earlier to ensure that women were fully integrated in Canadian development efforts as both beneficiaries and agents of progress. Women and development concerns were integrated into approximately 70 per cent of Canadian aid projects and programmes.

75. Ms. STOKES (New Zealand) said that her delegation had been pleased to join in sponsoring a resolution at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for UNCED which sought to ensure that women's contribution to the search for sustainable development was fully integrated in the UNCED process. In general terms, development policies and strategies must recognize the

(Ms. Stokes, New Zealand)

potential impact of women's full and effective participation on economic progress and overall national development. Development assistance must focus on those factors which enhanced or impeded such participation.

76. The experience gained by New Zealand's Overseas Development Assistance programme indicated that the prospects for success in development projects were enhanced when the needs and contributions of women were fully integrated in project design. Her delegation welcomed the statement by the Director of UNIFEM and said that the Fund - to which her country was a contributor - had a crucial role to play.

77. The Commission on the Status of Women, which was to devote priority to the full integration of women in development at its thirty-sixth session, should build on the useful work done at its thirty-fifth session. The world conference on women to be held in 1995 must provide a clear picture of what had been achieved and where future efforts should be focused.

78. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) said that his Government attached particular importance to the integration of women, their concerns and their contributions in all aspects of the development process. He underscored the essential role of women, particularly in developing countries, in ensuring sustainable food production and in marketing and processing activities. If women were guaranteed better education, technical skills, health care and economic resources and credit, society as a whole would benefit. Moreover, an increase in women's economic independence, which was directly linked to their control over the number and spacing of their children, was closely related to efforts to stabilize population growth.

79. Women were crucial to the achievement of environmentally sound and sustainable economic growth and development and, particularly in the rural areas of developing countries, had major responsibilities for the management of natural resources. They were also among the first to suffer the effects of environmental degradation. Yet there had been relatively little official recognition of the importance of women's use and management of natural resources in the developing world. New policy initiatives which drew on women's traditional skills in natural resource use and in the design and delivery of effective development projects were essential if real progress was to be made. UNIFEM and INSTRAW had an important contribution to make in that process, and he urged Member States to continue to support their work. The forthcoming Global Assembly on Women and the Environment should also provide a greater understanding of the critical role which women played in environment and development. Finally, the seminar to be organized at Vienna by the Division for the Advancement of Women ought to help Member States, United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations formulate development and aid policies which more effectively promoted equity for women.

80. Donors and recipients should consider adopting policies and procedures for systematic consultations with national machineries for the advancement of women throughout the aid programming cycle. Greater consideration should be

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

given to defining a specific process for the coordination of funding. His country's overseas development assistance sought to ensure that women benefited through involvement in all stages of programme and project development. Training in gender awareness was conducted at all levels of Australia's International Development Assistance Bureau, and policies on women and development were being reviewed with the aim of strengthening that area of its work. On a broader level, the significant role played by the Second and Third Committees in dealing with the question of women in development must not be underestimated.

Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.14

81. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.14, entitled "International Forum on Health - A Conditionality for Economic Development: Breaking the cycle of poverty and inequity", on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Zambia. Drawing attention to the text, he urged the Committee to consider it promptly so that it could be transmitted to the General Assembly for adoption in plenary meeting before the International Forum on Health was held at Accra in early December 1991.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.